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ABSTRACT

Indicating that the essence of social psychology is social influence, this inaugural lecture discusses social psychological dimensions of education. Particular attention is given to the topics of teaching styles and the impact of the student's personality and social learning outcomes on school achievement. It is pointed out that recent research on classroom interaction shows some agreement on certain aspects of teaching style which help low socioeconomic status children learn. Subsequent discussion focuses on recent studies conducted in England, including Bennett's (1976) controversial study of primary classrooms, Galton and others' (1980) Leicestershire study of primary classrooms and of transition from primary to secondary schools, and Hargreaves' (1967, 1975, and 1978) studies of social relations in a secondary school, interpersonal relations and education, and the effects of the classroom on teachers' behavior. Concerning self-esteem, the consistent finding of a high correlation between low self-esteem and low school performance is supplemented with summaries of additional research findings. Concluding remarks briefly explore ways in which school ethos, classroom climate and teaching style influence student achievement and suggest that the real challenge of education is located in the interactive, social psychological processes of adaptation and engagement. (RH)

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Perspectives on the Personal:[1]

Social Psychology and Education

INAUGURAL LECTURE

by

Professor Philip Gammage MEd PhD AcDipEd ABPsS

at

University of Nottingham School of Education

7 November 1985

ISBN 0 85359 160 1

(1) The title and the talk itself reflects something of the debt owed by the speaker to Professor Ben Morris, sometime Professor of Education at Bristol and Harvard Universities.

Perspectives on the personal: social psychology and education

INTRODUCTION

Since the days of Herbart and of William James, pedagogy and psychology have been linked. There is nothing surprising in this because both are often directly concerned with individual differences. Countless generations of teachers in training have been introduced to certain (at the time) fashionable portions of psychological theory in the hope that it would:- a) make good the clear deficiency in what is essentially a 'semi-craft' training, and b) that it would make would-be teachers more self-aware and child-aware such that a modest amount of humanity would creep into the process of teaching - once called by Willard Waller (1932) 'that special form of uneasily maintained dictatorship'.

Psychology, like education is sometimes regarded as a suspect discipline. Despite Kuhn's strictures that even the 'hard sciences' have their problems, many see psychology as soft and not easily able to provide usable theories and generalisations with much consistency.

Social psychology has an even harder time of it, for it sits in the interstices between sociology and psychology, an 'intersticial rag-bag' as I once heard it described. If it is a rag-bag, it is, for me at any rate, a very interesting one, likely to yield all sorts of goodies each time I have a rummage in it. It is because I find it fascinating, because it seems to

have so much in common with my principal interest, education, that I have chosen to talk about the two together here.

Since this is a relatively short presentation, and because I shall regard you all very much as a 'mixed ability' class, let me provide some rough maps so that you know where my topics may be located in the scheme of things.

DIAGRAM (1)

This does not pretend to be a complete map, nor does it show the many meandering little paths which link the major areas such as the socio-cognitive or transactional approaches beloved of some clinical psychologists. For instance 'transactional analysis', Berne's humanistic psychology was, some years ago, admitted into the mainstream of psycho-analysis after a long period of vilification and rejection. Some psychologists, too, regard the three main strands in the 'rope' of psychology as being behaviourism, psycho-dynamic psychology, and cognitive psychology; the rest being merely relegated to the roles of interesting adjuncts.

DIAGRAM (2)

This diagram attempts to provide not only a map of typical applied interests in social psychology, but to depict something of its origins and development. Both maps are simplistic and gloss over numerous problems and conflicts.

PSYCHOLOGY : THE MAJOR AREAS *,
and some of their principal concerns

BEHAVIORISM

Control of Behaviour
Reinforcement
Stimulus Response
Drive
Behaviour Therapy
Learning

ETHOLOGY

Instincts
Territoriality
Aggression
Drives
Fixed Action Patterns
Species Specific Behaviour

COGNITIVE PSYCHOLOGY

Epistemology
Learning
Concept Formation
Problem Solving
Moral Development

INFORMATION PROCESSING

Channel Capacity
Memory for Meaning
Feedback
Skills
Artificial Intelligence

HUMANISTIC PSYCHOLOGY

Self Actualisation
Client Centred Therapy
Peak Experiences
Personal Constructs
Encounter Groups

PHYSIOLOGICAL PSYCHOLOGY

Brain and Behaviour
Sleep and Dreams
Autonomic Nervous System
Drugs
Biofeedback
Localisation of Function

SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

Communication
Small Groups
Conformity
Attitudes, Values and Beliefs
Interpersonal Perception

PSYCHOMETRICS

General Intelligence
Mental Abilities
Attitude Measurement
Personality Types
Aptitudes

PSYCHOANALYSIS

Emotions
Psychosexual Development
Id, Ego, Superego
Unconscious Motivation
Defense Mechanisms
Maternal Deprivation
[Transactional Analysis]

* These areas are, not really discrete - but form the 'twisting strands' of the discipline.

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SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

ITS DEVELOPMENT AND TERRAIN

ORIGINS (1)

[clearly not exclusive to social-psychology]

- **Behavioural theory** [closely related to biology and in some respects sharing the same roots as cognitive approaches]
- **Psycho-dynamic theory** Freudian/neo-Freudian [later leading to humanistic and transactional theories]
- **Naturalistic theories** [discussions of the dynamics of relationships - and including use of literary sources]
- **Theories of social structure** [socio-economic and socio-anthropological]

APPARENT CORE (2)

The interplay between self, others and social systems

COMMON AREAS/METHODS OF INQUIRY (3)

- **Social influences on perceptual-cognitive processes** [concepts, attitudes]
- **Registers of Communication** [signs - symbols - language]

Establishment of identity in relation to others

- **Reciprocity** [learning co-operation and trust]
- **Growth of Self, coping with change in institutions** [processes basic to socialisation]

'MEANS' COMMON TO MOST (4)

The Study of Groups and of Adjustive processes within them

TYPICAL FOCI OF APPLIED INTEREST (5)

Child-rearing	Organisations
Communication	Roles
Teaching styles	Gangs/cliques
Leadership	Stereotypes/Attitudes
Solidarity	Personality
Propaganda	Motivation

DIAGRAM 1

Social Psychology

The essence of social psychology is social influence, how the real, imagined, expected and implied behaviour and attitudes of others affect our behaviour. Moreover, it is a discipline itself very subject to social influence. Like education, what counts as valid knowledge at the time is in part a reaction to contemporary influences as well as to the accumulated and documented findings of the 'pure' science.

If one looks at the box 5 of diagram (2) (a by no means exhaustive list of fields of applied interest) one may see how frequently any of those areas/methods shown in box 3 become important vehicles for opening up the fields of concern. Thus, social psychologists interested in, say, child-rearing, would be acutely aware that the construction of the child's reality would in-part be mediated through modes of communication, would be related to the quality of attachment, would be set in a particular culture with its own perceptual-cognitive emphases, and so on. In short, one of the fascinating yet frightening things discovered by the social-psychologist is that there is no complete answer. Doors open on to other doors. Speaking of childhood, Denzin reminds us that children are socio/cultural products. "The Amish, for example, eschew dominant American values, balk at compulsory education, and encourage their children to go only as far as the eighth grade, in schools managed by the Amish. By the age of two, the Amish young cease to be children" (Denzin, 1977, p17).

Most of us in education these last years have been only too aware of the debate centred upon the culture-cognition-achievement links. This debate has been fuelled by many controversies, e.g. those of racial differences, social class differences, sex

differences. Much of this debate has been conducted by social psychologists concerned with communication and language. In the recent past several generations of teachers became almost convinced that (to use Bernstein's terminology) users of 'restricted', 'working-class' language, were less likely to be able to deal with complex abstract thoughts and thus less likely to benefit from formal education. In part, too, some of the recent criticisms of Piaget have resulted from the re-examination of the central role of language in problem-solving. We now know that certain features of transitive inference, eg if 'A is bigger than B and B is bigger than C, is A the biggest?' can be handled by children much younger than Piaget originally suggested. We know, too, that complex relationships can be alluded to and even analysed clearly in language and patois formerly thought deficient.

Education

But what is education? Earlier, I talked of psychology and indeed social psychology as being disciplines sometimes viewed sceptically by scientists and others. Education, however, is frequently viewed (if noticed at all) as an even more diffuse area, sometimes as merely an accretion of interests and minor skills unworthy of serious consideration within the walls of universities. Certainly many people especially politicians, I fear, simply see it as a means. The process of education gets you somewhere, preferably gets the country somewhere. It is, of course, an 'investment for the exploitation of modern technology' (Floud et al, 1961). Yet, as Peters has pointed out, along with many others, education is a process of initiation into worthwhile activities. There is intrinsic worth in it all; it is not just about 'getting', not merely a step to the wealthier, richer life.

I think that social psychologists would soon remind us, too, of the interactions within a society, of the groupings and communication systems necessary for any formal education system to take place. They would remind us that us that if educational institutions are to be set up, there would have to be some crude consensus, or at least the political will to attempt its formulation; that certain features would be necessary.

For example:-

1. Broad agreement on those aspects of knowledge considered important for:-

   a) all people
   b) some people
   c) a few people

2. A structure of organisations by which those different aspects of knowledge might be transmitted;

3. specifically designated persons concerned to transmit that knowledge;

4. recipients grouped in ways which facilitate and ritualise some reasonably economic form of transmission;

5. ways of selecting and controlling the recipients and of matching that selection to the presumed societal needs.

"Such functions are embedded in the traditional values of the society and some are highly ritualised. Public examinations, certificates, degrees, membership of professional institutes or of learned societies; these

are so often taken as the legitimations proper to the appropriate and effective deployment of time in formal education. For there to be winners of such 'glittering prizes', there have to be losers too; and most children and adults who undertake education are usually fully aware that not everyone 'wins'; more, the incentive of winning itself may not seem worthwhile or desirable to as many as educationists might think." (Gammage, P 7, 1984)

People may often confuse education, schooling and certification. All three are usually subsumed under definitions of formal or institutionalised education. But all of us recognise that the three are (unfortunately) not necessarily each contingent on the other. For instance, Education is a never-ending process of developing characteristic ways of thinking and behaving on the part of individuals, groups and even nations. Schooling is a relatively planned and ordered but not necessarily most influential part of education.

DIAGRAM (3)

If one narrows the focus a little then one talks of school education being concerned with curricula. These curricula themselves have certain features which are worthy of examination. For instance, one might notice that the term curriculum is itself generic and that is covers content, (what counts as valid knowledge) pedagogy, (what counts as valid transmission) evaluation, (what counts as valid realisation by the teachers, pupils and society at large).

EDUCATION - Never-ending process of developing characteristic ways of thinking and behaving on the part of individuals, groups and even nations.

SCHOOLING - A relatively planned - but not necessarily influential part of education.

CERTIFICATION - Ways of quantifying valid realisation of apparent success of education (MEAL TICKETS?)

Diagram 3

Teaching styles

Many of us, might ruefully recall that our memories of content and evaluation are now hazy - but that we certainly recall the pedagogic style adopted. To investigate and illuminate the importance of teaching style has been a major preoccupation of social psychologists interested in education. What is the relationship between the medium and the message? How does transaction relate to content? Why is it that so many of us recall the teacher and his or her personality when we think of school days? Why is it so common for people to recall success or failure in terms of teaching style and personality?

I once worked with a teacher (now a Local Education Authority Inspector) who could make even 'not doing up one's shoelaces' such an interesting topic that he held 280 Charlton boys spell-bound in school assembly! Unfortunately, many teachers and lecturers are not that gifted, and the ways they interact with their pupils and students may as often hinder as enhance learning. Moreover, there are those would-be teachers - and perhaps, occasionally, actual teachers - who, as a colleague once graphically put it, 'could invoke a riot with a class of dead rabbits'. The lore of school and university days is not doubt littered with such stories!

1) The term 'styles' is used somewhat loosely, but is usually employed to categorise a relatively consistent set of teaching behaviours (including communication, both verbal and non verbal) which relate to the organisation of pupils, their curriculum and their behaviour.

2) The normal source of information on teaching styles is that of observation. Such observations are sometimes supplemented by questionnaires to teachers and sometimes (more rarely) by seeking information from the children themselves.

3) Some researchers (eg Bennett, 1976; Harnischfeger and Wiley, 1975) have expressed views that personality characteristics of teachers, whilst interesting, do not directly influence children's school achievement. They argue that 'active learning time', sometimes referred to in USA as 'seat-work', is a more satisfactory indicator of pupil progress and that organisational strategies, rather than active teaching behaviour (Bennett, 1984) are particularly important factors in children's learning. These researches emphasise classroom features like working in silence and reward systems as being more important than teacher pace, warmth, excitement, clarity, and so on. They have therefore defined style somewhat differently from many studies - and they emphasise very different features from those in naturalistic studies -eg those of Rogers (1983) who focusses upon affective aspects of teacher-pupil relations.

The bulk of research on teaching styles has taken place in USA. Furthermore much of it has taken place with pre-adolescent and early adolescent pupils. It has a long history, going back to at least the early 1920s, when time-sampling of teacher-child instructions was used in research funded by the American National Research Council - Committee on Child Development. Early research tried to identify those elements of teacher behaviour associated with

effectiveness. Typically, this consisted of emphasis on personality, knowledge of subject matter, attitudes and interests. These were correlated with ratings awarded by observers and, sometimes related to measures of children's achievement. [It is certainly arguable that modern HMI assessments are at least as subjective!] Some of the early American studies also looked at class size, and curriculum organisation in relation to measures of children's achievement. There were, however, relatively few attempts at detailed observation of what actually happened day-by-day in a classroom.

During the 1940s and 1950s the number of classroom observational studies increased, especially those investigating leadership. Some of this research was rather obviously influenced by notions of a three-fold typology, those 'autocratic', 'democratic' and 'laissez-faire' styles of leadership set out by Lewin, Lippitt and White (1939) in their investigations of behaviours in a boys' club. But central to the great flurry of 1960s studies came the work of Flanders, who investigated classroom interaction and concentrated on identifying certain groups of behaviour which he classified in terms of direct and indirect styles. Direct styles were typified by teachers who controlled events in the classroom, who did most of the talking and who tended towards strictness. Indirect styles were typified by teachers who allowed children opportunity to participate in and help to organise classroom life, to interact with each other and to help determine learning outcomes. The Flanders Interaction Analysis Category System (FIAC) was one of the most widely used time-sampling schedules and has led to the development of many other systems. It has been less used in England and much criticised.

[Galton, 1978, has published a list of over forty schedules used in England; about half of them relate to teaching at nursery/primary levels.]

Up to about the early 1970s many of the research findings strike the reader as inconsistent. Certainly, there were frequent criticisms of the ways in which classroom interaction studies were carried out, particularly of the way in which they often had few clear categories for non-verbal, and 'latent' messages, and for the high inference levels necessary required of the observer. Dunkin & Biddle (1974) pointed out how often teacher-centred behaviour seems to have been confused with characteristics of sternness or coldness. Some of the 1970s classroom observation schedules became so complicated that they needed relatively long training in their use. (for instance Soar, et al 1971 devised a schedule containing well over as hundred categories). Moreover, even with complex scales there tend to be many aspects of teacher behaviour and corresponding classroom 'climate' which are not amenable to measurement and which are embedded in constant exposure to subtle forms of non-verbal communication unlikely to be understood or fully appreciated by the observer.

Of course, many researchers (eg Ryans in the 1960s) have supplemented observation with pupil or student questionnaires. This latter has been a 'growth industry' in some parts of the USA, particularly as part of the system of teacher/lecturer evaluation now used in many colleges and universities. In such descriptions class mean scores on each item are sometimes taken as representing something like the objective 'reality' of the teaching style under investigation.

In all, up to about the mid-1970s the plethora of research leads more to agreement over the weaknesses of classroom interaction research, than to any consensus on particular styles and outcomes. Of later years, however, there is a little more consistency and agreement. Certainly there has been a tendency in the USA to concentrate upon the effects of teacher variables on specifically identified aspects of achievement. (see Brophy & Evertson, 1976). Increasingly, too, the background of the children (usually in terms of S.E.S.) has been identified as a key variable. Indeed as Rosenshine (1976) suggested, one area where an increasing consistency in findings had emerged was in teaching style in respect of low SES children. In reviewing schedules, Rosenshine talks of those styles of teaching which succeed with low SES children as having the following common characteristics.

1. considerable time spent on broadly 'academic' work

2. consistent 'seat' work with carefully structured material

3. the use of narrow, direct, and very carefully focussed questions

4. immediate feedback

5. carefully monitored group work

6. clear teacher control and dominance

7. very careful articulation of materials and ideas in clearly identified small steps

8. clear goals

Apparently, to be successful, all this has to be combined with teacher warmth, conviviality and careful and frequent use of praise!

Of recent studies in England, two in particular stand out. These are (1) Bennett's (1976) very controversial study of primary classrooms; and Galton's et al (1980) Leicestershire study of primary classrooms and of transition from primary to secondary schools.

Most primary school teachers are very familiar with these two sets of research. Bennett, they will recall, concluded, amidst great publicity, that pupils taught in a 'formal' style (competitive, class-teaching of a traditional type) were in basic skills some four months ahead of those taught by more 'informal' methods. Bennett's study has been used a great deal to castigate so-called progressive practices in English primary schools. There have been many criticisms of his methodology and his (1980) re-analysing the data suggests a very different interpretation, but the impact of his original research, and subsequent assertions, seem to have created a noticeable disillusionment among the public generally.

Galton et al (1980) in their studies show that typical primary school practice and teaching style hardly matched the 'Post Plowden' rhetoric, nor that of those politicians who (after Bennett and the William Tyndale Affair) accused primary schools of sloppy, child-centred work. The truth was that teaching

styles in primary schools, whilst perhaps more flexible than in former days, have for the most part remained class-orientated, teacher-centred and fairly highly directive. Galton's work is regarded as somewhat more methodologically sound than the earlier work of Bennett and chimes well with the later NFER studies of Barker-Lunn (1984) as well as with observations of HMI in national surveys. (DES, 1978,1982,1985).

For Hargreaves (1967, 1975,1978),looking at secondary school classrooms,the emphasis has been somewhat different. Secondary school classrooms critically alter teachers' behaviours as well as children's. The teacher is not a 'free agent' and the pressures exerted by groups of adolescents can be considerable. Indeed, as most of us who have adolescent children know,socialisation is very much a two-way process. This is certainly true of the classroom. There are few simple one-way causes and effects.(Woolfolk,1985) Generally researchers have identified firmness, clarity and consistency as essential components of the secondary teacher's style. These seem most usually correlated with high pupil outcomes. But there are serious snags. Corrigan (1970) points to the dangers of too heavy-handed and directive approach causing resentment amongst working-class children; and Argyle (1983) distinguished between what he referred to as establishing dominance per se and effectively establishing a dominant relationship. Morris (1972) and Rogers (1983) have stressed the importance of a growing mutuality in the relationship; they see the freedom and self-respect of the learner, as vital in effective learning outcomes.

Children do, of course, have their perceptions of a 'good' teacher. These appear to change both in relation to the dominant mores of the group, as one

might expect, but also in relation to the age of the learners. However, from studies of different perceptions, it is clear that one feature remains fairly constant 'being treated as a person, as if you are of some consequence' emerges as central to most children's and student's views of good teaching. Carew & Lightfoot, 1979, Docking, 1980).

Personality, social learning and school achievement

When one talks of school achievement - one is usually talking in terms of curriculum outcomes. These will depend upon many factors - but put very crudely they may be represented in the following.

DIAGRAM (4)

An important feature of this diagram concerns those characteristics which children bring to bear upon the curriculum - and which need to be taken into account both in its planning and shaping and its transaction. The diagram is by no means original. It owes a lot to Shulman & Keislar (1966) in particular.

Children come to school with a cargo of rich experiences. Some of these will be gained from learning similar situations to those at first presented in school. But already, even at four and a half years, the now common age of entry into the state system, a child will have opinions about himself. These may well include ways he attributes responsibility to himself or to others for the outcomes of certain events. Differently oriented social psychologists have talked of this differently. Some like Rotter (1966) and his associates have talked of perceived personal control. Others, like de-Charms have referred to the ways people grow to see themselves as either 'pawns' or 'origins', and have

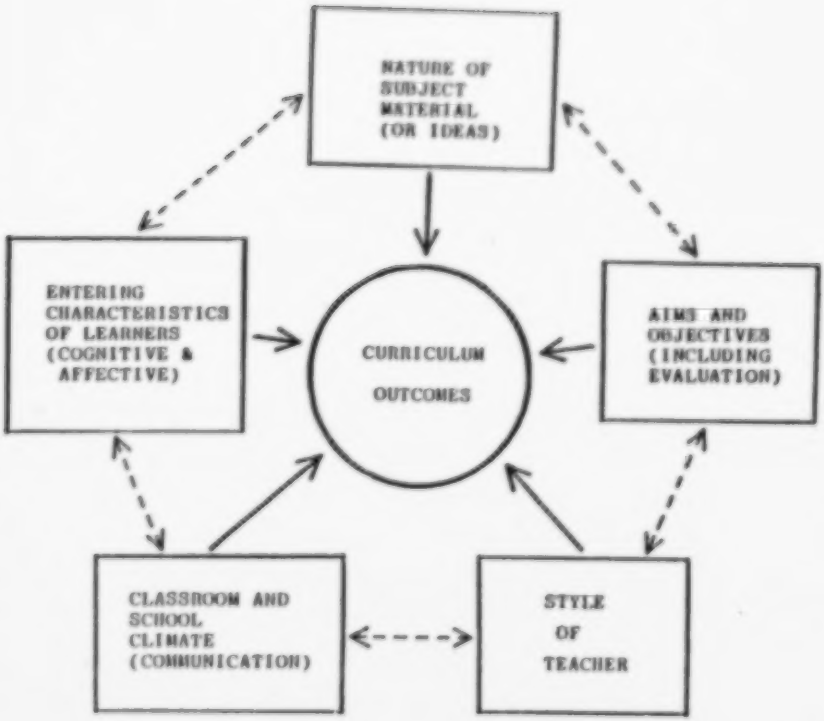
NATURE OF SUBJECT MATERIAL (OR IDEAS)
ENTERING CHARACTERISTICS OF LEARNERS (COGNITIVE & AFFECTIVE)
CURRICULUM OUTCOMES
AIMS AND OBJECTIVES (INCLUDING EVALUATION)
CLASSROOM AND SCHOOL CLIMATE (COMMUNICATION)
STYLE OF TEACHER

DIAGRAM 4

emphasised the "complex interweaving of motivational and cognitive development" (de, Charms, 1976,p202). Still others have talked of 'alienation' or of 'learned helplessness'. Some of these social-psychologists' perspectives hark back to the old Jesuit adage 'Give me the child until he is seven, and I will show you the man'.[You may recall a series of famous TV films based on this adage starting with one - called Seven Up.] Whatever the research perspective, there is abundant evidence to show that differential attribution of responsibility to the self is a major outcome of our early socialisation and appears to be directly linked to self esteem and expectation of others.

The relationship between self-esteem and school achievement seems very complex indeed. Many, like Lawrence (1983) has seen improving self-esteem as a key to improving specific school performance. But there are problems, since the child may well look outside school for confirmation of his/her self-esteem; again something which teachers of adolescents well recognise. Purkey (1970) suggested that the self-esteem of the learner was a crucial factor in successful learning at all stages and levels. This, of course, is a slightly different point, and, by and large, we may agree that, generally, diminishing someone's self-esteem is not likely to enhance learning. Indeed, despite many contradictions in the research on self-esteem and achievement, one fairly constant factor emerging from research is of a pretty high correlation between measure of low self-esteem and low school performance. "The causal relationship of self-esteem to academic achievement is an especially difficult one to establish, however, The two seem to result from

complex sets of variables, and constantly to influence each other through the various experiences of success and failure in school and life". (Gammage, 1982, p177)

An examination of the research in this area in 1982, and subsequent more recent reading, would lead me to make the following points.

1) Considerable research exists which establishes a relationship between low self-esteem and low school achievement.

2) A fairly substantial body of research also points to a relationship between high self-esteem and high school achievement.

3) Some research points to a connection between low self-esteem and what one might term 'excessive' anxiety.

4) Some research demonstrates relationships between positive self-esteem in children and the degree to which the teachers seem calm, supportive, facilitative.

5) Some research suggests that confidence in the child (expressed in the form of expectancy and in other ways) can significantly influence the child's learning.

6) Some research shows a relationship between negative pupil self-concept and threatening or sarcastic teacher behaviour. (see Gammage, 1982, pp197-202)

Many social psychologists have investigated the relationship between self-esteem and school achievement, and almost equally popular (in the USA, but not in the UK) have been studies of perceived personal control. Such studies have usually employed particular conceptions of locus of control as set out originally by Rotter (op cit) and refined by researchers like Phares (1976) or Nowicki & Duke (1983). Generally speaking, studies of locus of control have demonstrated that 'internally' oriented children feel more in control of their own lives and, attribute more responsibility to themselves and less blame to others[1]. Such children show possible greater persistence and are more competent socially. Some of this research has attempted to link measures of the child's socialisation (usually in terms of SES and value systems) to his perceptions of generalised control and responsibility. A sizeable amount of N.American research has also shown reasonably high correlations between measures of internality and school achievement. (Stipek and Weisz, 1981). The concept of locus of control has a certain intuitive appeal about it and is something with which teachers might be more familiar, as long as it is not employed as a 'single key which unlocks all doors'. There are few English tests and many American ones, of which most stem from Rotter's 1966 test or from the work of Nowicki. This latter has been consistently and carefully directed since the early work of Nowicki and Strickland (1973) and much of it is school-related.

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[1]There are serious problems with such a simplistic view, however. See, for instance the work on learned helplessness (Seligman) and reformulations of attribution and social learning by Abramson et al (1978).

Again, and simplifying much too easily, it could be said that the direction of research findings implies that 'externals' need particularly carefully structured materials and classroom organisation, whereas 'internals' prefer, and possibly do better, in open or child-centred situations.

Most educationists are accutely aware that school programmes and conditions have optimal effects for only a limited number of children. In an ideal world planners and providers of schooling and its curriculum would not just rely upon or presume certain 'desirable' child-characteristics for a curriculum to succeed. They would know. Yet all of us do know now that certain forms of socialisation lead to certain quite distinct cognitive perspectives of the world. Educational environments can be very different, (Bennett, 1976; Galton et al, 1980, Rutter et al, 1979) and already very different classroom experiences are available by chance. Yet, presumably, schools and classrooms would have much more success if they could match the organisations and the programmes more nearly to the actual characteristics of children. Currently, classroom research does seem much nearer to identifying broad pedogagical-cum,-curricular organisations that suit initially high or initially low achieving children (see for instance Brophy, 1978, Solomon and Kendall, 1979, Entwisle and Hayduk 1982). School ethos, classroom climate and teaching style do seem to make a difference. They make it in a variety of ways:-

1. In ways in which the transactions communicate particular evaluations of the child such that they can help to overcome an ill-matched or difficult element in the curriculum and thus enhance motivation and self-attribution in the child.

2. In the ways which teachers do their best to maintain differential access to different emphases in or levels of the curriculum

3. In the ways in which teachers take account of the different self-attributions of the children when organising and working with particular curricula.

4. In the ways in which the climate of the classroom (and perhaps of the whole school) can be used to compensate for and modify certain child characteristics.

Although it is unclear how it happens, there is evidence that teachers' expectations and evaluations have a cumulative effect on children, an effect which may cohere or conflict with the evaluations of peers and parents. Little research exists on this cumulative effect over time (Entwisle & Hayduk, 1982); and this is particularly true of self-concept research, since few if any have examined those vital but elusive elements of personality in a developmental context. But, if one takes heed of research in self-concept, attributional and social learning studies in the classroom, they all point to the importance of attributing power and responsibility to the self as a vital element in school achievement. Such perspectives stress the highly interactional nature of classroom learning; a learning that involves the child in building up observations about himself and of his performance. Such observations become internalised and then form a part of the way that child interprets the world. They themselves become crucial to later success and failure.

In sum, therefore, it seems to be me that three particular features are worth reiterating:-

1) A child's reactions to any new learning experience are part of his personal history of responses to related experiences. The psychological import (meanings and loadings) will be vital determining factors in his response.

2) The child is an active agent in interaction and in his construction of the world emotional factors play a vital role; in particular the self-concept may be pro-active and have a 'knock on' effect.

3) It may be in the emotional context of the curriculum that the teacher can most modify, alter or stimulate reactions to learning.

The counsel of perfection, is that, because the interaction between teacher and child is multi-faceted, because it is embedded in complex webs of different perceptions and values, then the ideal is of a curriculum which is child, group and community shaped. Moreover learning has to be involving the child in something he recognises as worthwhile. We sometimes think that if the child comprehends what he is doing, that is sufficient in itself. And perhaps we have advanced further than the time of the apocryphal story of the dominie and the Scots lad. The lad complained that he didn't understand what he was doing "Aye", the dominie replied, "and ye're not meant to understand, merely to learn it." Those of you familiar with the Plowden report - and its ambience - will know how dearly many primary teachers held to the precept 'I do and I understand'. But the Confucian completion, as I understand, is 'I do, I understand,

and I hold valuable'. It is the holding valuable which to me seems the key to it all, the internalising of valuing it and wanting to do it.

Overall, it is clear to me (or it suits my prejudices) that the real challenge of the education remains embedded in the interaction, in adaptation and engagement. Curriculum guidelines, whether government originated or otherwise, are only half the story. Conceptions of education as received wisdom, as techniques of problem-solving are deficient. Unless we have an education which has value for the child, which both relates to and expands his cultural norms, as well as has academic worth; unless we constantly refer to our knowledge of the vehicle, humane interaction, in ways which speak to the child and commit and engage him, our education is likely to consist of much ritual time-filling, and we will deserve the dislike of school which so many children express.

My own former tutor puts it thus:

> "Though the act of learning is something no teacher can achieve on behalf of the learner, nevertheless the learner has to be brought to this act by the skilful persuasion of a professional teacher. This can only be accomplished when relationships are such that there is mutual understanding between learner and teacher.....(Kirby, 1981, pp90-91)

Lastly, to finish with another story, now apocryphal, which says it all.

'Once upon a time the animals had a school. There curriculum was simple and all animals took all subjects. These were running, climbing, flying and swimming.

The duck was very good at swimming, better in fact that his teacher; he even achieved reasonable marks for flying, but he was hopeless at running. Because he was so poor in this subject, he was made to stay in after school, and had to drop his swimming classes in order to practise running. He kept this up -until he was only average at swimming. But average is acceptable, so nobody really worried about it except the duck.

The eagle was considered an aggressive and unruly pupil, and was disciplined severely. He could beat all the others to the top of the tree in the climbing class, but insisted on using his own way of getting there!

The rabbit started out top of the class in running, but then had to drop out of school because of a nervous breakdown connected with so much extra work in swimming.

The squirrel generally led the climbing class, but his flying teacher made him start his flying lessons from the ground instead of from the top of the tree, and he developed 'charley-horses' from over-exertion on take-off and began getting 'C's in climbing and 'D's in running.

The practical prairie dogs apprenticed their offspring to a badger when the school authorities refused to add digging to the curriculum.

At the end of the year an abnormal eel, that could swim well, run, climb and fly just a little was top of the school'.

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